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› December 2020



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Industrial Disputes, Australia

The number of disputes (strikes or lockouts), employees involved and working days lost; cause of dispute; duration; and the reason work resumed

Reference period December 2020

Released 11/03/2021

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Key statistics

In the December quarter 2020:

- 32 disputes occurred.
- 2,600 employees were involved and 16,500 working days lost.
- disputes occurred in 5 industries and in 7 states.

During the year ended December 2020, there were 77 disputes and a total of 33,500 working days lost.

	Quarter		Year ended	
	September 2020	December 2020	December 2019	December 2020
Number of disputes				
Commenced in period (no.)	19	27	135	71
Total (no.)	21	32	147	77
Employees involved				
Newly involved ('000)	4.2	2.2	51.6	10.2
Total ('000)	4.3	2.6	53.2	11.4
Working days lost ('000)	11.7	16.5	64.4	33.5

Overview

In the December quarter 2020, there were:

- 32 disputes, 11 more than from the previous quarter.
- 2,600 employees involved, a decrease from 4,300 in the previous quarter.
- 16,500 working days lost, an increase from 11,700 in the previous quarter.

Year ended estimates:

- 77 disputes occurred, 70 less than in the previous year.
- 33,500 working days were lost, 48% less than the previous year.

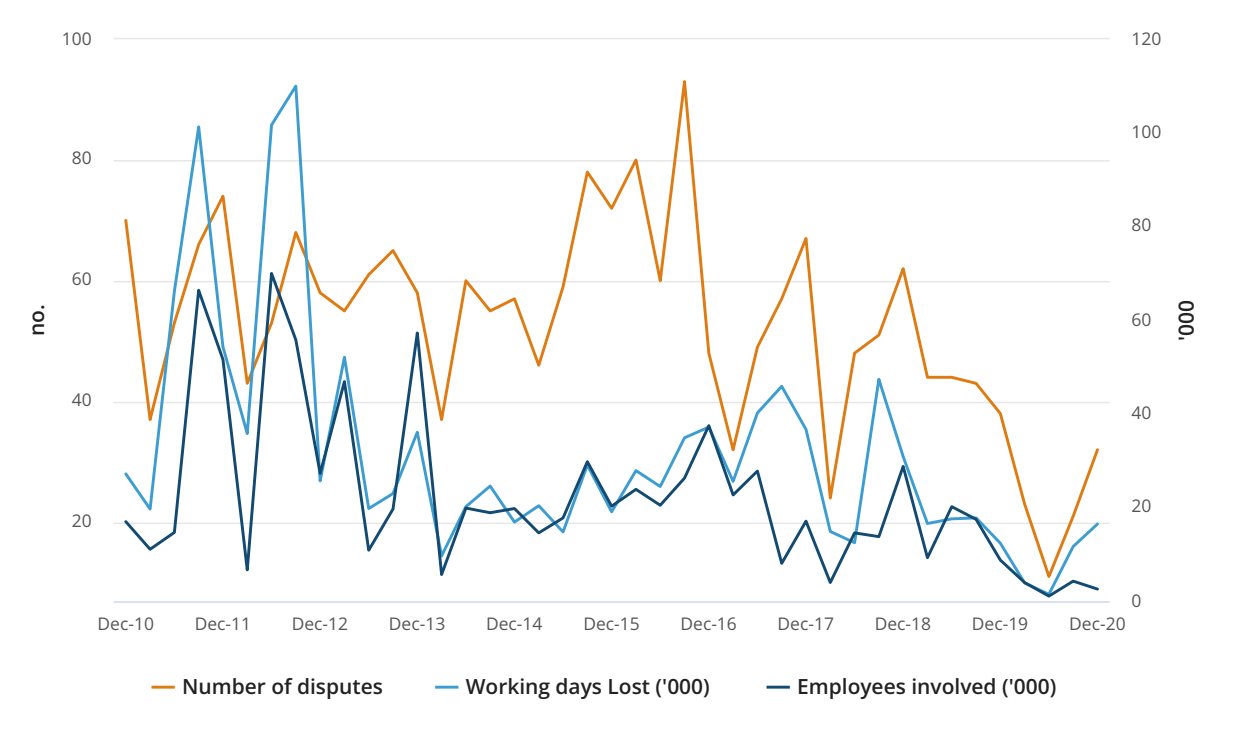
1 Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter

Number of disputes		Employees involved				
Commenced in period		Total	Newly involved	Total	Working days lost	
no.		no.	'000	'000	'000	
December Quarter 2018		53	62	25.6	28.8	30.9
March Quarter 2019	32	44	7.8	9.3	16.6	
June Quarter 2019	34	44	18.8	20.2	17.6	
September Quarter 2019	35	43	16.8	17.5	17.8	
December Quarter 2019	34	38	8.3	8.8	12.4	
March Quarter 2020	17	23	2.9	4.0	3.9	
June Quarter 2020	8	11	0.9	1.1	1.5	
September Quarter 2020	19	21	4.2	4.3	11.7	
December Quarter 2020	27	32	2.2	2.6	16.5	

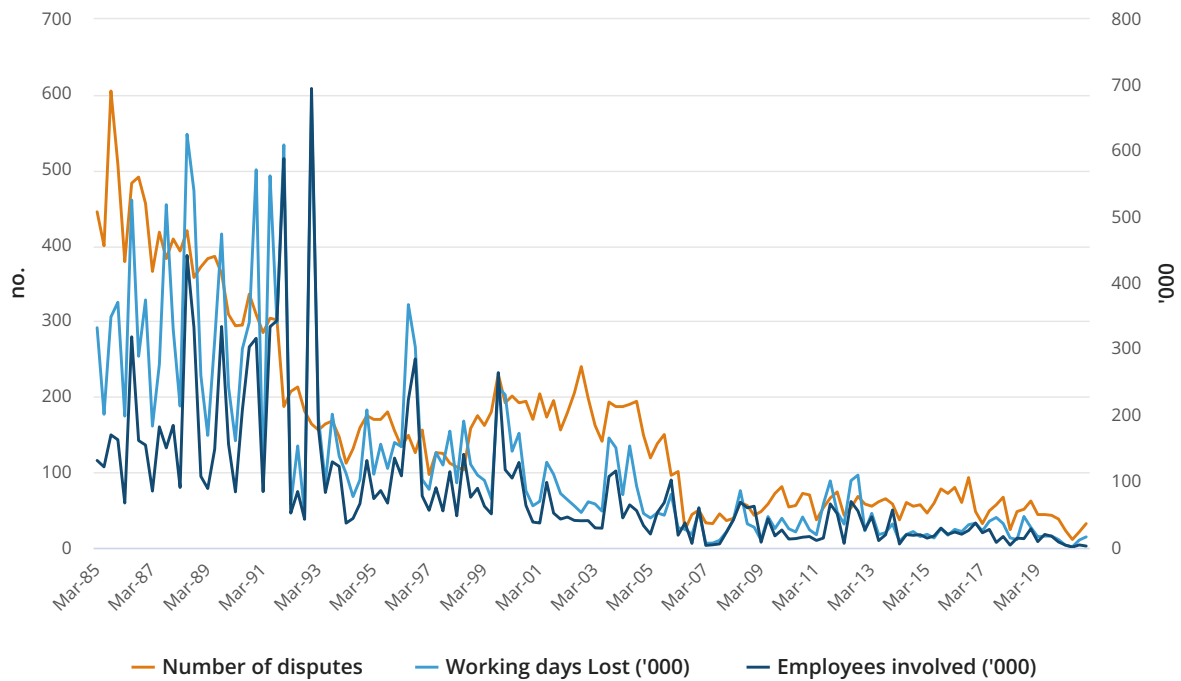
Long-term trends

The level of industrial disputation over recent years is considerably lower than in the 1980's and prior decades.

Industrial disputes in the last 10 years, Australia



Industrial disputes historical series, Australia



Industry

In the December quarter, disputes occurred in five industries. More than seven in ten (76%) working days lost were in the Transport, postal and warehousing industry.

2 Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, industry

	September Quarter 2020		December Quarter 2020	
	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees
	'000	no.	'000	no.
Mining				
Coal mining	-	-	-	-
Other mining	-	-	-	-
Manufacturing				
Metal product etc (a)	-	-	np	np
Other manufacturing	1.4	2.8	2.3	4.6
Construction	0.7	0.8	0.9	1.0
Transport, postal and warehousing	9.5	17.7	12.4	21.6
Education and training; Health care and social assistance	-	-	-	-
Other industries (a)	0.1	-	np	np
All industries	11.7	1.0	16.5	1.4

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

a. See [Glossary \(https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/industrial-disputes-australia-methodology/sep-2020#glossary\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/industrial-disputes-australia-methodology/sep-2020#glossary) - Industry - for details of industries included.

States and territories

Disputes occurred in seven states and territories in the December quarter, with more than seven in ten (75%) working days lost occurring in New South Wales.

3 Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, states and territories

	September Quarter 2020		December Quarter 2020	
	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees
	'000	no.	'000	no.
NSW	6.0	1.7	12.4	3.3
Vic.	3.6	1.2	2.1	0.7
Qld	1.4	0.6	0.7	0.3
SA	np	np	0.5	0.6
WA	np	np	0.6	0.5
Tas.	np	np	np	np
NT	-	-	-	-
ACT	-	-	np	np
Australia	11.7	1.0	16.5	1.4

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

Cause of dispute

Most industrial disputes are Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related. Over the past 10 years, disputes over employment conditions have generally been the most prevalent.

EB related issues were the cause of 69% of disputes (11 of 16) which ended in the September quarter 2020.

4 Cause of disputes which ended during the quarter

	June Quarter 2020			September Quarter 2020		
	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost
	no.	'000	'000	no.	'000	'000
Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related						
Remuneration	-	-	-	4	0.3	0.4
Employment conditions (EB)	3	0.4	2.7	7	0.9	6.4
Other EB related	-	-	-	-	-	-
Non-EB related						
Remuneration	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employment conditions	-	-	-	-	-	-
Health and safety	3	np	np	2	np	np
Job security	-	-	-	-	-	-
Managerial policy	1	0.1	-	1	0.1	-
Union issues	2	np	np	2	np	np
Other Non EB related	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	9	1.1	3.3	16	1.8	7.5

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

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Working days lost

Working days lost is a measure of the length of a dispute, relative to the number of employees involved.

Of the 16 disputes which ended in the September quarter, half lasted for a day or less.

These disputes had:

- 800 total employees involved; and
- 500 working days lost.

5 Working days lost for disputes which ended during the quarter

	June Quarter 2020			September Quarter 2020		
	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost
	no.	'000	'000	no.	'000	'000
Up to and including 1 day	6	np	np	8	0.8	0.5
Over 1 day and up to including 2 days	-	-	-	1	np	np
Over 2 and less than 5 days	2	np	np	3	np	np
5 and less than 10 days	-	-	-	2	np	np
10 days and over	1	0.1	2.4	2	np	np
Total	9	1.1	3.3	16	1.8	7.5

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

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Reason work resumed

The reason work resumed relates to the last day of action taken. Resumption of work can occur without resolution to the issues that triggered the dispute.

There was a pre-determined return to work for 44% of disputes (7 of 16) which ended in the September quarter 2020.

6 Reason work resumed for disputes which ended during the quarter

	June Quarter 2020			September Quarter 2020		
	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost
	no.	'000	'000	no.	'000	'000
Negotiation without intervention of a third party	1	np	np	2	np	np
State legislation -	-	-	-	2	0.2	0.1
Federal legislation -	-	-	-	2	np	np
Pre-determined return to work	3	0.4	2.7	7	np	np
Resumption without negotiation	5	np	np	3	0.3	0.3
Mediation -	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other reasons -	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	9	1.1	3.3	16	1.8	7.5

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

Inquiries

For further information about these and related statistics, contact the National Information and Referral Service on 1300 135 070.

Data downloads

Table 1: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period

[↓ Download XLS](#)

[86.5 KB]

Table 2a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost, industry

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[105 KB]

Table 2b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, industry

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[102.5 KB]

Table 3a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days

lost, states and territories

↓ [Download XLS](#)
[151.5 KB]

Table 3b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, states and territories

↓ [Download XLS](#)
[141 KB]

Table 4a: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, cause of dispute

↓ [Download XLS](#)
[342 KB]

Table 4b: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, working days lost per employee involved

↓ [Download XLS](#)
[152.5 KB]

Table 4c: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, reason work resumed

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[262 KB]

All data cubes

↓ [Download ZIP](#)
[406.89 KB]

Previous catalogue number

This release previously used catalogue number 6321.0.55.001.

Methodology

[Industrial Disputes, Australia methodology, December 2020](#)